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To: Health Insurers, Health Plans and Providers
From: Susan Lett, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Immunization Program
Date: November 2008
Subject: **Reduced Availability of State-Supplied Rotavirus Vaccine for Children**

As part of the Commonwealth's response to the current economic situation, the state vaccine account was reduced by \$6 million. As a result of this cut, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) will no longer be able to provide rotavirus vaccine to some infants, as outlined in the table below.

| Restriction in the Availability of Rotavirus Vaccine for Infants |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Beginning July 1, 2009, MDPH will no longer be universally supplying rotavirus vaccine for children.Providers will need to purchase rotavirus vaccine for those children who are insured.MDPH will continue to supply rotavirus vaccine for children eligible for the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) entitlement program*. |

* To be eligible for the VFC program, a child must be younger than 19 years of age and meet one of the following criteria: be enrolled in Medicaid; be without health insurance; be an American Indian or Alaska Native; or be underinsured and receive care at a federally qualified community health center.

Due to this change in policy, providers will be purchasing rotavirus vaccine. There are currently 2 formulations of this vaccine approved for use in the United States:

- RotaTeq® manufactured by Merck; and
- Rotarix® manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline.

The Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) code for RotaTeq® is 90680. The CPT® code for Rotarix® is 90681.

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 175, Section 47C, health plans and insurers are required to cover appropriate immunizations for children until the age of six. MDPH urges health plans and insurers to reimburse all providers for these vaccines regardless of the setting of their administration (e.g., provider's offices, community clinics, health departments, hospitals and other settings). MDPH also urges reimbursements to providers for actual costs paid by practices for the vaccines, as well as for a reasonable administration fee.

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Please remember that in October 2008, a major reduction in the availability of adult vaccines was also instituted as a result of the fiscal situation. Since that time, MDPH has not been able to provide most vaccines for adults at private provider sites. Only **very** limited quantities of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPV23), measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and varicella vaccines have been made available at public sites for the highest risk patients without health insurance.

All of these childhood and adult vaccines are routinely recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and are a **standard-of-care** for preventive services. Published recommendations can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/ACIP-list.htm>.

Enclosed you will find a revised version of MDPH's *Childhood Vaccine Availability Table* which provides more guidance on state-supplied vaccines.

If you have any questions regarding vaccine availability, please contact the Vaccine Management Unit at 617-983-6828.